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THE LEAVES OF HEALING

PHILIP ALBERT JOURDAN



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T H E L E A V E S
O F H E A L I N G
A N D O T H E R P O E M S

BY

PHILIP ALBERT JOURDAN



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TO THE MEMORY OF
MY SON

SERGT. ALBERT CATON JOURDAN

KILLED AT THE BATTLE OF AMIENS

AUGUST 8TH, 1918



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THE LEAVES OF HEALING

THE LEAVES OF HEALING

I

Spake thus the soul of a People:
"Lord God, I am ill at ease!
I fought the foes of thy choosing;
I guarded thy open seas;
I wrought in a seething cauldron,
And sounded the depths of hell:
And naught did I seek as guerdon
Save this—"Thou hast served Me well!"

I leapt to the fray with laughter,
Nor counted the fearful cost;
Must I who have rescued others
Be robbed of my ancient boast?
Lord God of the nations, hear me!
Thy servant is stricken sore:
A remnant returns from the battle,
The rest shall return no more!

Hast thou no word for thy servant,
No balm for his gaping wound?
The mother sits weeping, childless;
The vine to the trunk is pruned.
Must I too serve for a ransom,
Like Him they nailed to a tree?
Lord God, I have done thy bidding;
I wait for a word from thee!"

II

A Voice from the azure stillness:
"What is it thou wouldest of me?
Go searching for the leaves of healing
That fall from the Living Tree!
The freedom thou broughtest to others,
It never was truly thine:
Go speak with the stricken mothers,
For theirs was the gift divine!"

The vine of my right hand planting
Lies stripped to the bark, ye say;
The nation that did my bidding
Is doomed to a swift decay.
Not so! peal the heavens above you;
Not so! cries the blood-purged soil:
The fruits of the great To-morrow
Belong to the men who toil!

Go gather the leaves of healing
That fall from the Tree of Life;
Let justice flow like a river,
And make ye an end of strife.
Bid brother be joined to brother
(In union shall be your stay)
Then endeth your night of weeping;
Then cometh the Golden Day!"

THE DEEPER STRAIN

In a cloister dim stood an organ
That throughout the lengthening years,
Had sought to shrieve the souls of men,
And dry their falling tears.
But its deepest notes they had never heard,
Nor its message could understand;
For the soul of the organ had ne'er been stirred
By the touch of a master hand;
*For the soul of the organ had ne'er been stirred
By the touch of a master hand!*

In the cloister's shade stood the Master,
And the untaught keys he pressed,
Whose notes throughout the fruitless years
Had left the world unblest.
And the soul of the organ throbbed with pain,
As it trembled beneath his hand;
But it found in its anguish the Deeper Strain
That the weary would understand;
*But it found in its anguish the Deeper Strain
That the weary would understand!*

PEACE

As if a star had sudden shot from out
The inky night,
With gleam so bright
That each dark, threatening cloud swift turned
about
And fled as from the Eye that never sleeps,
But o'er the slumbering world love's vigil keeps,

So fell a sound upon my listening ear,
Like evening bell,
Or ocean swell,
Or like the echo of a murmured prayer;
And all my fevered pulses sank to rest,
As sinks a babe upon his mother's breast!

Whence came this vagrant note that charmed away,
With dulcet strain,
My heart's deep pain?
Was it the breeze which at the close of day
Lulls to its rest the storm-tossed ocean wild,
Turning its foaming wrath to whisperings mild?

Was it a white-robed angel from above,
Who ready stood,
In waiting mood,
And sudden struck a quivering chord of love

The Leaves of Healing

That swept the spheres and found an answering
chord
Within my breast—the music of the Lord?

Or was it, soul of mine, His matchless voice,
Whose "Peace, be still!"
Brought calm at will
To frenzied lake, or bade lost souls rejoice,
Whose blurrèd reason, erstwhile conflict torn
At demon's beck, awoke to hope—twice born?

Matters it whence or how, so I am blest
With this deep peace,
This glad surcease
To strife? E'en though by unknown fingers pressed,
These broken strings shall yet sweet music make,
As once again my onward way I take!

A SMILE

An angel sat and dreamed awhile,
And of her dream was born a smile
Which glancing here, and pausing there,
Dispersed the gloom, till all was fair.
A shepherd saw and whispered low,
“It must be Spring,” and ‘gan to blow
Upon his pipe, while at her loom,
A maiden sang of love and home.
An aged sire caught the strain,
And dreamed that he was young again.
A burdened mother praised her lot,
And all the ills of life forgot,
While near at hand a sufferer lay
And smiled at pain the livelong day.
The cruel wind forgot to blow
Upon the lamb shorn but enow,
And from the erstwhile frozen bowers
There sprang to view the new-born flowers,
While leafing trees their shelter lent
To warbling birds on mating bent.
Thus was the gladdened earth adorned,
And all the life of men transformed,
Because an angel dreamed awhile,
And in her dream begot a smile.

APRIL

A blaze of glory in the eastern sky,
A sudden gleam—too sudden far to last!
An upward streaming of the sun on high,
And then a sky with dark clouds overcast.

A day of tears, now slow, now falling fast;
A ling'ring glance toward joys forever fled;
A nameless fear that life is fading fast,
And then a prayer for rest among the dead.

A lang'rous breath; a waking out of sleep;
A trembling wish for yet another day:
A mighty surge of life from out the deep
Sweeps o'er the earth and then—the month of May!

GRIEF

Grief paused awhile within a cottage home,
Whence silent feet had borne a winsome child:
Grief bowed the head, then sweetly smiled.

When next Grief came, 'twas to a mansion fair,
Where on a costly bier a mother mild
Had found her rest: again Grief smiled.

There fell a day when One went singing by
To war's grim task. Amid the carnage wild,
Fighting, he fell! And still Grief smiled!

An angel passed; I asked her why Grief smiled:
Answer she made, "Beyond the outer gate,
All flowers bloom—or soon or late!"

A LENTEN MEDITATION

What doth it profit, all the care
On self bestowed?
Were self not better taught to share
Another's load?

What doth it profit, all the time
Consumed in play?
What of the many whose bells chime
Nor night nor day?

What doth it profit, all this gain
For thee and thine,
The while thou strive not to attain
To wealth divine?

Only in serving do men find
Life's dream come true:
Their hurt is quickest healed who bind
The world's hurt too!

THE NEOPHYTE

(To M. B. H.)

A Remembrance

Master divine, obedient to thy call,
Gladly I come and render thee my all;
My ransomed soul, with strength and life complete
Thou mayest have—I lay them at thy feet!
Since thou, my Lord, on me hast deigned to smile,
Naught from thy side shall e'er my steps beguile!

Once I did dream of joy apart from thee;
Once thy mild yoke in madness sought to flee.
Vain was the task! no peace my wanderings knew;
For spurnèd love did still my soul pursue.
From these vain dreams at length I turn aside,
That in thy love alone I may abide!

Well I recall the moment when to thee
My raptured soul flew in its ecstasy!
'Twas not thy charms, dear Lord, that won my
love;
Gazing I saw thee marred and knew what drove
The nails, and all my soul upleapt to keep
The tryst with thee and joy from sorrow reap!

Content am I to fill a lowly place,
So I but catch the radiance of thy face;
Into thy likeness grow from day to day—
The love that follows those who lose their way;
Till, made complete, I shall at last arise
And be with thee, my Lord, in paradise!

SOWERS

THE SOWERS

I

Forth from the womb of time they came,
Born of a prayer for 'during fame;
Bearing the fruits of cosmic strife,
Strife of the brute for fuller life.

One rode a charger gleaming white;
The other a steed as black as night.

This, had an eye as clear as truth;
That, threw a glance which knew no ruth.

Here was a balm for every pain;
There, for a portion, endless bane.

Flowers bloomed in the wake of one;
Dragon's teeth where the other had gone.

On through the world unseen they rode,
Scattering seeds in the fields of God;

Scattering seeds of bloom or blight,
Heaven's own dawn or hell's dark night;

Scattering seeds o'er hill and plain,
Peasant's garden and king's domain;

Scattering seeds from sun to sun,
Pausing not till the task was done.

II

Quoth the Sower on the charger white:
“I have strewn my fields with seeds of light;
A bounteous harvest looms in sight:
Patient I wait!”

Cried the Sower on the jet-black steed:
“In virgin soil I have dropped my seed—
Ambition, lust, unholy greed:
I also wait!”

Then the arching heavens grew big with fate,
As a Voice replied: “The hour grows late,
And eager reapers throng the gate:
Thrust in the sickle and reap!

For the world’s full harvest-tide is here,
And the fields are white, both far and near;
And the clusters red of the grapes appear:
Thrust in the sickle and reap!”

III

A casket of nard from the flowers pressed;
A flagon of wine to cheer the distressed;
A handful of corn that has stood the test,
And the rest.

Chaff which the wild winds drive away,
As the Sowers blithely go their way,
Scattering seeds for another day,
Far away!

IV

Thus the unseen Sowers come and go,
And the winds of God o'er the furrows blow;
But the glorious End begins to loom,
Though the pace be slow of the coming doom!

For the good remains, as the evil dies
And the chaff reject 'fore the swift wind flies;
And the clear-eyed Prince on the charger white
Shall the victor be o'er the Lord of Night!

FOOLS

*"Poor fools to spend life's fairest hours in dreams
Of surcease to the world's upstreaming woe!
Give o'er your dreaming; taste the joy that streams
Unbidden at your feet, and real life know!"*

One was a poet, and he spent
Life's hours in song, and deftly blent
The grave and gay in many a flight
On fancy's wing. Him darksome night
Beheld and fled, while joy returned—
The sad and broken to him turned!

The next a prophet was, whose eyes
Gleamed with the light that never dies.
"Awake!" cried he, "the promised day
Is almost here; why longer stay
Among the pots, when night is past?"
Some few his way a glance did cast!

Still yet another meekly served
His Master's poor, nor ever swerved
From this his task to gather pelf,
Or ceased his toil to comfort self,
But all endured—counting the cost—
He gathered sheaves among the lost!

Meanwhile the rest held on their way,
Nor saw the coming of a day
When these whose lives they held in scorn
Should reign as kings, thereunto born;
And Love's redeeming sceptre sway,
Who dreamed and wrought the Golden Day!

PATIENCE, O SEER

(To a Modern Prophet)

Patience, O Seer! for thus it thee becomes
To scorn reprisal, in the reddening fight
'Twixt age-long darkness and the growing light.
Follow His steps, whose boundless meekness sums
The height of wisdom and the depth of love;
Whose bleeding feet the guilty stones caressed,
And leaving hate to these, still onward pressed!

Patience, O Seer! the morning comes apace!
Though storm-clouds lower, they presage glorious
dawn.

Stirs the great human brotherhood forlorn
With new-found hope; the light upon its face
Not born of earth, but coming from above.
The glory shall not fade but brighter shine,
Unto the perfect day of dream divine!

Patience, O Seer! Nor boist'rous haste nor fear
Must mark the steps of him who leads the van;
But measured tread, as fits a Son of man
Whose courage high is linked to vision clear.
Thus calm of soul, and moved with pitying love,
Hold thou the torch aloft that all may see:
Follow thy Lord that men may follow thee!

DETHRONED

*Low bent the god above the prostrate form
And drank his fill of life, rich, ruddy, warm,
Then soared aloft the while the sleeper woke,
Forespent and gray—the alabaster broke!*

Breeders of strife! who claim what ne'er ye gave,
E'en thus make ye of man th' unwilling slave
Of your desires and leaping wine of youth
Regardless drain, while slow-maturing truth,
Garnered with care, becomes the trysting place
Of crafty priest, and that proclaimed as grace
Which travail won, or this new brought from
heaven,
Which ne'er left earth. . . .

Is this the only leaven
Can raise the lump? Must youthful crosses show
For aye man's laggard feet the way to go?
Are there no paths save jagged slopes of pain
Up which to toil the cloud-swept heights to gain?—
So be it, then; but mark, ye blatant Powers!
When 'tis attained; when that far goal is ours—
When strife has brought the Age that is to be,
And man proclaims at last that man is free—
Then shall have end your reign among the rest;
Love shall be king: alone he meets the test!

TOLLING BELLS



THE TOLLING BELLS OF FRANCE

At the twilight hour, when the day was done
And the shadows crept o'er the silent gun,
They were wont to ring, at the set of sun,
 The tolling bells of France.

As the files went by with a solemn tread,
Ere the "dust to dust" of the Book was read,
There was homage paid to the glorious dead
 By the tolling bells of France.

And when twilight comes and I sit alone
In my silent grief, with my hopes all flown,
I can hear the bells with their mournful tone,
 The tolling bells of France.

Like the distant boom of a minute gun
For a warrior soul that is passing on,
Floats the sound to me, at the set of sun,
 Of the tolling bells of France.

And the deep-toned bells from across the sea,
Bid me weep no more, my beloved, for thee;
For thy rest is sweet, and thy soul is free
 Near the tolling bells of France.

When the angel's trump sounds the Grand Reveille,
And the call is heard by the brave who fell,
With a gladsome peal shall your full notes swell,
 O tolling bells of France!

THE PRESENCE

In grief, I bowed before a wayside shrine,
 In attitude of prayer;
There came a breath of love so like to thine,
 It told me thou wert near!

COUNT NOT THE YEARS

Count not the years they lived, who fell
 In Freedom's holy cause;
Or long or short, 'tis actions tell—
 The years are but the pause
Betwixt high deeds and theirs the prize,
 The unsheathed sword who bore,
In stainless honour, fell to rise
 Life's victors evermore!

SAY NOT HE DIED

Say not he died, whose body sleeps
In Flanders fields, 'mid poppies beautiful:
Who falls in Freedom's cause dies not, but keeps
A tryst with life, large and more bountiful!

Say not he sleeps. His waking soul
Burst through the rent oppression made, and soared
Aloft triumphant to its glorious goal,
The all-victorious presence of the Lord!

Say not he failed. In life's dread war,
They only win who seem to lose their all.
For him, victorious, all the battle's o'er;
His guerdon this: that he obeyed the Call!

THE REVOLT

You have called it "glory," you who know;
You have said, "Be proud that you let him go!"
Have you felt the ache of the cruel blow
That has come to me, that you prattle so?

You have said, "Be brave, be brave, dear soul!
You shall meet again where no surges roll
Over hearts that break, and no sad bells toll
For the loved one borne to his final goal."

You forget we'd planned our future *here*,
With a life brim full of earthly cheer.
Will the years that glide make the plan less dear
As I walk alone, in the silence drear?

You might have your heaven—for at least a while,
Could I catch a glimpse of his radiant smile.
It were heaven to me, just to see him smile
And to hold his hand for a while, a while!

Do you hear me, sirs? Do you understand
That I walk alone in a weary land?
If he saw me weep, He would understand,
And would silence keep—Can't you understand?

THEY HAVE COME TO-DAY

A mother's reverie, on receiving her soldier son's personal effects from the Director of Soldier's Estates.

They have come to-day, poor remnants, left
From the tragic scenes in the fields of France;
And my lone heart bleeds, afresh bereft,
As I look them o'er with a mother's glance.

They have come to-day, the letters penned,
"To be posted when the grim work's done."
O it came eftsoon, the work's dread end
And the awful price that the victory won!

They have come to-day; a Bible worn,
Where the soul found rest, and a record brief
Of the daily haps, right to the dawn
Of the fatal day of a mother's grief.

They have come to-day. What a tale they tell
As I scan them here in the twilight dim!
'Tis a tale that makes my bosom swell
With a nameless pride, as I think of him!

They have come to-day—Whom do I see
In the firelight's glow, beside my chair?
Dear God, thou hast brought him back to me,
I will rest content: thou hast heard my prayer!

WHAT SHALL I SAY?

Thou wert to me far more than all beside,
And thou art gone, my love, while I abide.
Hand clasped in hand we walked, a short, sweet
while;
Now I must walk alone, robbed of thy smile.
Our souls were one, dear love, but one our hope;
We faced the future buoyant, gay:
Now we must walk apart, I on this slope,
And thou on yonder shore—What shall I say?

Say that He erred who took thee from my side,
And me bereft of life and strength and guide?
Who, knowing my frail heart, yet bore thee hence,
Whose manhood strong and true was my defence?
Say that He knoweth not how hard it were
(Whose will the myriad worlds obey)
To meet the coming days, year after year,
Alone and desolate?—What shall I say?

Lord of the worlds, He too hath suffered pain!
Died not his well-beloved to purge our stain?
Who then am I that I should scorn to bow
My head before a storm that laid Him low?
Weeping, I yield thee, love, to his embrace,
Whose love henceforth shall be my stay,
Until the hour when, of his boundless grace,
I clasp thy hand again—This will I say!

BUGLE BLASTS



HANG LOW, O MIST

Hang low, O Mist!
Hang low.
Where'er thou list,
There go.
Go tell the earth,
In its joy and mirth,
Of coming woe,
Deep woe
On all below.
Hang low, O Mist!
Hang low.

THE SPIRIT OF FRANCE

I am the Spirit of France!
I was born in the long ago;
And down through the valleys I glide,
And over the mountains I blow.
At the sound of my horn
True heroes are born;
And the youth of the land,
In their glory and pride,
At my word of command,
Have the foeman defied;
For I am the Spirit of France!

I am the Spirit of France!
I was born in the long ago;
And down the bright sunbeams I glide,
And in the soft breezes I blow.
When my flag is unfurled
And my thunders are hurled,
Then all discords are hushed
That my sons would divide,
Till the foeman is crushed
In his insolent pride;
For I am the Spirit of France!

I am the Spirit of France!
I was born in the long ago;
And down through the ages I glide,
And over time's furrows I blow.
And the unconquered dead
With their rich blood have fed
My unbroken strength
As they died,
In their pride,
For me, the Spirit of France!

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

I am the Spirit of Life!
Wherever I list, I go.
I stand at the gates of strife,
But death I do not know, not know.
I laugh at the naked sword,
And mock at the full-drawn bow;
For I am the Spirit of Life!
And death I do not know, not know.

I am one with the ether blue;
I am one with the primal mist;
The heavens with stars I strew,
And I hold the wind in my fist:
For I am the Spirit of Life,
And I go wherever I list!

I stand at dawn,
Near the gates of morn,
And watch my sons go by;
In the noon tide heat,
Their blistering feet
I mark as they still go by;
In the fading light
Or the shades of night,
They yet are passing by,
But they do not die, not die.
For Day I know,
And Night I know,
But death I do not know, not know.

In the far-off time,
The bells did chime,
And the earth was glad and gay;
For my soft winds blew,
And my glad things grew
In that far-off festal day.
But a thought awoke,
And the silence broke
In that far-off festal time:
'Twas a thought of strife
For the larger life
Of the things that ne'er decline.
And my glad things grew,
And my sad things grew,
And the strife waxed fierce and high;
But the heart is strong,
Though the way be long,
And my sad things shall not die, not die:
For Time I know,
And Pain I know,
But Death I do not know, not know.

So I stand at the gates of birth,
And I stoop o'er the couch of pain;
I dwell in the house of mirth,
And I visit the tents of gain.
And I speak to the sons of men
And bid them take up the strife,
For the Thing that dies is Born,
And Death is the dawn of Life,
And I am the Spirit of Life!

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

I am the Spirit of Love!
And wherever I list, I go.
I roam at will
O'er vale and hill;
And I launch my dart
At every heart,
And the hearts of men I know:
For I am the Spirit of Love,
And wherever I list, I go!

I am the Spirit of Love!
And wherever I list, I go.
And I laugh at the love-sick swain,
I gloat o'er his galling chain;
But I bend with awe
At the cottage door,
Where a crooning mother I see,
With a babe upon her knee,
And the love-light in her eyes.
If this hope dies,
Then all else dies!
And thou, O France,
Thou too shalt die!
So the deadly tip
Of my dart I dip
In the fount of mother-love;
And thou shalt live, O France,
For I love thee, France,
And I am the Spirit of Love!

THE SPIRIT OF ART

I am the Spirit of Art!
I go wherever I list.
I love the babbling brook
And the ingle nook,
Where the fairies hide
And the nymphs abide,
In the depths of the darksome wood,
In the shade of the flower-strewn wood,
Near the banks of the shimmering lake;
Where they dance and play
All the blithesome day,
In thy beautiful land, O France!
For thy land is fair, O France;
And I am the Spirit of Art!

Or I venture near,
In fear,
To some cloister dim,
Of the ancient time
And the ancient hymn,
Where they prayed for thee, O France!
(Hast need of prayers to-day, O France?)
And I see it all:
The belfry tall,
Where the ghostly call
Rang out each day
For the monks to pray—
To pray for thee, O France!

For the hooded men
Go past again,
As I draw nigh
To the altar high,
With its holy light
And its awesome sight,
Of the suffering Christ
With his age-long tryst,
And his head bent low
With the weight of woe
(Hast known this woe, O France?)
And I turn oppressed,
And sore distressed
At the awful power,
The crushing power
Of the blow that's dealt
And the pain that's felt;
For I am the Spirit of Art!

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

I am the Spirit of Truth!
I go wherever I list.
I scour the earth
For a man of worth;
Nor wealth nor birth, I wist,
Can e'er atone
For a land that's known
To have turned from the way of truth
(Thou lovest the truth, O France!)

For the statesman true
And the soldier brave,
Be they many or few,
Shall the nation save,
When the scales are set
By the goddess blind,
And the fool is met
By the nobler mind;
For I am the Spirit of Truth!

I am the Spirit of Truth!
And the truth makes free
Wherever men be,
Whatever men see;
For the lust of gain
Brings infinite pain,

Bugle Blasts

And the lust of power,
In the final hour
Shall receive its dower,
When the red, red ruth,
Of the sword of truth,
Shall blaze a way
To the gates of day,
Through the long, dark night
Of the tyrant's might
(Thou lovest the light, O France!)
And this go tell,
Where thy liegemen dwell
And thy merchants sell, O France!
Let the bells ring out
And the people shout
(Though the foe may doubt)
For I am the Spirit of Truth!

CAPTAIN PAUL

I

Out in the street, the world was all astir;
Men stood in groups about the tavern door
Waiting their call, or proudly wore
The livery of France. Old men did stir
Their hearers' hearts with tales of other wars
Wherein they'd played a part; while down the road
Rumbled huge guns in haste to reach the front.
Following these, to bear the brunt
Of the first battle shock, the veterans strode—
The hope of France in this her righteous cause!
A strange, new calm upon the nation fell,
And stern resolve, which left no room for hate
But all endured, that soon or late,
The nation's valour might the foe repel
In headlong ruin from the native heath!
Grandsires bethought them they were young once
more,
And ploughed the fields, and sowed and reaped
the grain;
And women frail, yet not for gain,
Wrought day and night t'increase the sacred
store
Of fearsome shells, dread harbingers of death!
And little children on the village green
Shouted and marched and played at war,
And trenches dug, and proudly bore

Above their curly heads where 'twould be seen,
The country's flag, the glorious Tricolor!

II

Paul was their captain, and full many a head
Of ripening grain fell to his trusty blade;
And many a boastful speech he made
Unchecked, as up and down his troops he led.
His mother smiled, nor guessed what lay before
Her soldier lad, nor how his little soul
Swelled with deep reverence for his native land,
And in its puny might would stand
Firm as a rock round which the surges roll
But cannot move it from its solid base!

III

Not many days went by ere came the test;
For riding swiftly towards the little town,
Uhlans appeared, and springing down
From their hard-ridden steeds, called for the best
Of food for man and beast, found in the place.
Watching for hidden foes, the troopers spied
The mimic captain marching on the green,
And part in jest, and part in spleen,
Brought him before their chief, who sternly cried:
"What have we here, a baby with a sword?
Are there no men in this benighted land,
That they must filch the cradle to secure
Enough defenders, or endure

Our rule benign? Here, boy! I understand
You play with weapons. Tell me, on your word
Of honour, who did teach a child like you
To march and drill and lead about these boys.
For such as you guns are not toys,
Nor are swords playthings. Come, now, tell me
true!

What is your name, and where got you that
sword?"

To whom the lad, abashed but unafraid:
"The sword is mine, sir, and my name is Paul;
And I am waiting for the call
To fight the foes of France. My mamma said,
When papa went away, I might get word
Some day to go; and since that time I've drilled
Most every day with all these other boys.
Oh yes, I know guns are not toys!"

Toys never hurt; but men have oft been killed
By cruel guns, so mamma says; though why
Men love to kill I do not know, do you?

Is it because they want to take away
Our lovely France, they do not stay
In their own land? If that is so, we too
Shall learn to kill and these bad men defy!"

Silent, the uhlans listened to the words
Of infant wisdom challenging the creed
Of black aggression and the greed
Which mocks at justice and at freedom leers,
While the poor mother, trembling, watched her
boy,

Standing erect and firm, his foes among,
Uttering truths he was too young

To understand; then with fierce, holy joy
She clasped her hands and thanked God he was
hers!

The trooper rose. "Enough of this!" he said.
"We've tarried overlong in this drear place;
But ere we leave, I'll set the pace
For all this drilling herd will make them dread
To follow this young upstart as before."
So saying he, the unresisting lad
Stood on a table in the sight of all,
And with an oath did on them call,
To witness how a Prussian true was made
Of one who but a Frenchman was before.
Holding a thaler in his hand, he said:
"Cry, 'Hoch der Kaiser, Deutschland Uber Alles!'
And this is yours. But, list, my Paul!
Do but refuse, and I will strike thee dead,
And cast thy carcass to the carrion birds."
Paul shot a swift glance at the trooper's face,
T'assure himself that he was not in jest;
Then close his silent lips he pressed,
And calmly stood, while not a trace
Did he betray of fear. Then found he words:
"I cannot do, sir, what you now command;
A child of glorious France, so was I born,
And none of mine have e'er forsworn
Allegiance true to our dear motherland
Or sold their freedom for the traitor's gold.
No, keep your gold, sir uhlans: I remain
True to my flag!" Raising his hand aloft,
He shouted: "Vive la France!" as oft
He'd done before when 'gainst the standing grain,

In mimic charge, he led his troops so bold.
A cheer arose; the trooper swore
He'd shoot them all. Then turning where Paul
 stood
Pale but defiant, in the mood
Of one who death has faced and fears no more,
Demanded that he do as he was bid.
“I give you one more chance,” cried he:
“Say, ‘Hoch der Kaiser!’ and I let you go;
Refuse again, and with one blow
Of this my sword your vaunted flag shall be
Stained with your blood, and this vile land be rid
Of one more puling brat!” With eyes, meanwhile,
That eager scanned the distant blue, erect
Stood Paul like one who, gaily decked,
Hungriily waits some coming joy the while,
By duty held, he lingers still at danger's post. . . .

IV

The test was o'er. Sheathing his bloody sword,
The vengeful uhlans swiftly rode away
'Mid curses deep that would not stay
Till such as he had met their just reward
For every foul deed from coast to coast.
Back to his home the neighbours gently bore
The bleeding child and staunched his ghastly
 wound,
And o'er the couch his mother crooned
Her lullabies as if, a babe once more,
She nursed him at her breast and France was free.

As night came on, he slowly raised his head,
And with a wistful look he murmured low:
"I'm glad they came, for now I know
That I was called, as you, dear mamma, said,
When papa went away, that I should be.
When I am gone, please say I kept my word,
And that I died for France; and tell the boys
To all be brave, and change their toys
For guns and swords, and always keep their word
To our dear mother, France. I must not stay;
I hear them calling me: Good-bye, good-bye!"
Thus passed a soul as pure as morning dew,
And true as pure, and brave as true.
Such souls pass on: 'tis false to say they die!
Who freedom loves, alone keeps death at bay.
And thou, O France! though through thy favoured
land
The foe may ride; though thy proud heart may
bleed;
The while such sons as these thou breed,
Unconquered still and dauntless shalt thou stand
And hurl defiance at unnumbered foes!

THE CRY OF THE LITTLE PEOPLES

Daughter of the Sea-god,
Bend a listening ear:
Yonder, hosts are mustering;
Hearts are filled with fear !

Sacred covenants broken—
Trampled in the dust!
Hark! the foe is shouting,
“Yield, or die ye must!”

Soon the barriers weaken;
Onward sweeps the flood,
Like a swollen torrent
Sudden turned to blood!

Smiling fields before it;
Death and hell behind;
On it sweeps, relentless,
Filled with fury blind.

Who shall stem the torrent?
Break the tyrant’s might?
Save the Little Peoples
From the hopeless night?

Daughter of the Sea-god,
Weak, we turn to thee;
Thou wert ever faithful:
Come, and set us free!

By thine ancient travail;
By the world's deep woe:
Daughter of the Sea-god,
Rise, and meet the foe!

A MOTHER AND HER BROOD

I. The Mother.

O my children, widely scattered,
Dwellers on the Seven Seas;
Bone of England! Blood of England!
Nurtured at Britannia's knees;
On my sea-girt throne I've listened
To the story of your fame,
All my mother heart rejoicing
That ye bear an honoured name.

Years agone, and greatly daring,
Your brave sires left my side,
Crossed the oceans, cleared the forests,
Built them cities far and wide;
Made the desert bloom like Eden,
Wrested from the hills the gold;
Made the valleys ring with laughter,
Laughter of their children bold!

Fondly still they called me Mother—
Mother of a mightier breed!
Vowed allegiance to my sceptre,
Swore to prove their word in deed!
Taught my laws unto their offspring,
Called them “children of the free;”
On their ‘Scutcheon graved the legend:
“Britons ne’er shall bow the knee!”

Said they'd hasten at my bidding
From the earth's remotest shore
(Whelps ahoming at the thunder
Of the aged lion's roar)
At my footstool lay their treasure,
In my quarrel spill their blood;
Love me, serve me without measure—
Swore they thus, in fear of God!

O my children, widely scattered,
Speaks your heart the same to-day?
Floats the flag still proudly o'er you
That your sires learned to obey?
Ye have lands and gold aplenty,
And no terror breaks your rest:
Do those lands still nourish freemen?
Shall the helpless call you blest?

List! the hour has come to prove you!
Breaks there not upon your ear
Sound of tumult, wail of sorrow,
Cry of anguish and despair?
'Tis the cry of helpless victims,
Ground beneath a tyrant's heel:
Bone of England! Blood of England!
Can ye harken and not feel

Stir within your soul hot anger,
Stir anew the ancient flame
Which made heroes of your sires,
Gave to them a deathless name?
Thrill with thought of mighty daring,

Eager longing for the fray;
Braving death to rescue others,
And because your yea was yea?

I have fought full oft for freedom,
Ever guarded freedom's gate;
Often travailed, sorely stricken,
Held a nation's truce with fate!
Once again I tread the winepress,
And as heaven above is true,
Be my helpers few or many,
Foe of mine the day shall rue!

I would share with you the glory
Of my quarrel, mine and God's;
O my children, do you hear me?
Ye are freemen, and not clods!
Raise the standard, sound the rally,
Bid your legions to the fight;
God and motherland are calling:
O my children, help the right!

II. The Brood.

We are coming, Mother England,
In our manhood clean and strong,
We are coming o'er the waters
To undo a mighty wrong;
To avenge the Little Peoples
And the tyrant put to scorn;
All our young life freely yielding,
Till true liberty is born!

We are coming, Mother England;
For our sires oft have told
Of the mighty deeds of daring
Of thy warrior sons of old.
We thine offspring too are British,
With the Briton's scorn of fear,
And a hatred of oppression
That shall cost the foeman dear!

We are coming, Mother England,
For thy cause and ours are one;
We are freedom's sworn defenders,
Though our race is but begun.
Thou didst guard us in our weakness:
In thy might we too were strong;
And we come thy gifts returning:
Wealth and life to thee belong!

We are coming, Mother England:
Dost thou hear the tramp of feet
O'er the hilltops, down the valleys,
In the busy city street?
'Tis the lion's whelps ahoming
Who have heard the call of blood:
We are coming, Mother England,
In the name of Home and God!

LET US HAVE PEACE

(March, 1919)

*Let us have peace, O mighty Four!
Sweet Spring is here, 'tis at the door,
And nature cries for swift surcease
To human hate: let us have peace!*

“Let us have peace,” while Belgium bleeds,
Unstaunched her wounds, her glorious deeds
Forgot, and o'er her ruined towers
The screech-owl reigns, the passing hours?

“Let us have peace,” while France alone
Must guard the gate, her helpers gone?
Shall her fair breast forever be
Bared to the sword to keep you free?

“Let us have peace,” the while ye feed
The pampered brute whose foul deed
Drenched fairest lands in seas of blood,
And now would fain escape the rod?

“Let us have peace,” while gaunt-eyed stalks
The Terror Red that daily mocks
At law's restraint? Must freedom die
By her own hand, the while ye lie

In dangerous ease, nor heed the call
To save her from so deep a fall,
Or homeward turn with spreading sail,
Content an ye but miss the gale?

Ere this shame come, O brave who rest,
Your warfare past, your deeds confessed,
Forth from the humbled grave arise:
Ye cannot sleep, if Freedom dies!

THE SHIPS AT SCAPA FLOW

Previous to sinking their vessels, interned at Scapa Flow, the German officers held a banquet on board the flag ship and just before hoisting the signal to scuttle the ships, drank a toast to the doomed fleet.

—Daily Paper.

Drink to the ships in Rhennish wine;
Drink to the ships of the battle line,
Lying at anchor in Scapa Flow,
Flying a signal Germans know!

Drink to the “Day” that never came;
Drink to a nation’s lasting shame;
Shame of surrender without a blow,
Shame of the ships at Scapa Flow.

Drink to the ships, then wreak your spite,
Steeping your souls in blacker night;
Add to your crimes this one crime more:
Scuttle your ships, then pull for the shore!

Riseth the wrath of the Peoples free,
Wrath at this latest perfidy;
When shall the nations find you true?
When may they trust your word or you?

Say, will ye never play the game,
Never rejoice in aught save shame?
Yours be the guerdon Judas won:
Traitors remain till time is done!

THE PATH OF THE SPOILER

I

The night was still. Feeling no weight of woe
Or coming doom, peaceful, the peasant slept
Within his humble cot nor kept
Aught save the guard of lips 'gainst envious foe:
Trusting high heaven its sacred watch to keep.
Without, the stars looked down upon a scene
That rivalled paradise: the scented air
Sweet fragrance breathed and here and there
Deep-uddered cattle drowsed, or 'neath the sheen
Of silvery moonbeams grazed, disdaining sleep.
Beyond, the undulating, fruitful plain
Stretched glorious in its robe of golden hue
(True harbinger of harvest almost due)
While o'er the slope the ever-deepening stain
Of ripening vineyards slowly came to view.
Peace brooded o'er the earth, and holy calm
Was on the land and sea; such peace as reigned
In Eden ere lust unrestrained
Wrought havoc deep and broke of love the charm
That bound a brother to the one he slew.

II

So sped the hours, when o'er the startled night,
Like crack of doom, war's echoing thunders broke!
Peace fled; the sleeping carl awoke
To find the world in flames! Or ere the wight
Could reason why, the foe was at the door
Then onward swept, while all the molten corn

Lay crushed beneath his trampling feet and blood
Of grapes was mingled with a blood
Of richer hue, to mark a conqueror's scorn—
Branding with shame his name for evermore!
The valiant churl beside his cottage lay,
His only crime defending wife and child;
While those he loved, with terror wild,
Fled from the fate they feared, and ere the day
Was wholly spent sweet death had sought and
found.

III

Thus lustful greed walked hand in hand with pride
And ruin wrought throughout the bleeding land;
Who barred the way, or dared to stand
'Gainst all this hate, was quickly swept aside,
Or to a fate of nameless horror borne.
By vandal hands rare treasures were despoiled,
And homeward sent the outraged muse to charm;
While holy priest, 'mid war's alarm
Deep in his prayer, they slew, nor yet recoiled,
But cast his humbled body, bleeding, torn,
Upon the very altar that he served,
And filling up the measure of their crime,
Fired the ancient fane which time
Had made more sacred in the eyes of men,
And given a place renowned from shore to shore.
So great at last the widening horror grew
That strong men wept and women swooned with
grief,
Till nations rose to bring relief
From such dire woe and swore allegiance true
'Gainst him who planned the deed—for evermore!

AT THE MARNE

(September, 1914)

AT THE MARNE

I

HYMN TO THE WAR GOD

Hail to the mighty Thor!
God of the unsheathed sword;
Our fathers' God, of yore:
Hail him, the Sovereign Lord!

Heard ye his voice to-day,
Speaking in thunder tone?
Saw ye his lightnings play
Round our Imperial throne?

Me, by his high decree,
Doth he this day make known,
Lord of the Yet-to-be,
King whom the world must own!

This is the day foretold
(Sung by the ancient bard)
When comes the Age of gold,
Won by the glittering shard.

Now, by this token true,
Sons of the German clan,
Come, and your vows renew:
Follow your Superman!

Claim your place in the sun,
Men of the German breed;
Others their race have run:
Yours is the nobler creed!

Wait not the lingering hour:
This is the day of fate!
Freedom must yield to power;
Meekness give place to hate!

II

THE BOAST

My guns still bark; but where their music ends,
At break of day, begins the great advance
Shall put thy capital, O France,
Within my grasp if favouring fortune lends,
As heretofore, its aid to my dread power.
Then shall my might victorious ring thee round
With hoops of steel and all the sound
Of mirth within thee die, thou boasted home
Of viol and tabret, dulcimer and lute!
An thou dost yield, and from me mercy crave,
And offering make of tribute and of lands,
I'll set thee free, loosing the bands
From off thy neck, that so thou mayest save
Thy soul—if soul thou have! But if it suit
Thy humour to defy my royal power
And force these belching guns of mine to loose
Their thunders 'gainst thee, then, a truce
To maudlin pity! for I swear the hour
Is yet unknown when such deeds have been done
As shall in thee appear. Louvain and Rheims
A tale unfold through gaping gothic sides,
Of wrath infuriate that hides
Within my mailèd fist and, loosened, streams,
A molten hell, from which e'en devils run!
So then beware how thou dost tempt the ire

Of my victorious legions when they reach
The bounds appointed, lest they teach
Thy sons to pass through seas of living fire,
And thy proud towers level with the dust.

III

THE SENTENCE

In the Judgment Hall,
Where the Spirits tall
Take heed of the ways of men,
A Soul stood forth
To declare the worth
Of a scratch of his royal pen.

“It is naught,” he said,
As the word was read
He vowed on a certain day:
“The oath I signed
Was an oath to blind,
Not a debt that a king must pay!

“Though kings are men
When they wield a pen,
They rule by Right Divine;
Their word, as such,
Is to them a crutch:
By deeds alone they shine.”

But the culprit knew
As the silence grew,
There searched him an Eye of flame;
And he bent his head
As the word was said:
"Go forth to undying shame!"

Then away he strode
And did lay the load
Of his guilt on lesser men;
And his liegemen wrought,
And his liegemen fought
To undo the scratch of a pen.

But the days move on
'Neath the circling sun,
And the reckoning time draws near;
For the slow-grown doom
Begins to loom:
Never fear, O land, never fear!

IV

THE CALL OF THE MIST

List, Spirits, list!
Low hangs the Mist:
Where'er men be,
Naught do I see
But woe,
Deep woe!

Hark, Spirits, hark!
The War-dogs bark.
Do ye restrain,
Or turn to gain
This woe,
Deep woe!

Haste, Spirits haste!
Time's sands swift waste.
Curb ye the power
Of this dread hour,
And banish woe,
Deep woe,
From men below.

V

CHANT OF THE SPIRITS OF THE AIR

Life, Love and Truth, Immortal Three!
With chastened hearts we turn to thee;
In darkest night vouchsafe a ray
To light thy people on their way,
Through pain and strife
To fuller life,
Till dawns at length the perfect day!

First Voice

Thy sons are slain with the sword;
Thine altars are broken down.

Second Voice

But France still honours her word,
Nor barters her just renown!

Strophe

Who comes as the dawn,
On the wings of the morn;
With spear point bright
In the growing light?

Who rides on the cloud,
From the East to the West
(When the heavens are bowed)
To aid the oppressed?

Antistrophe

I have seen his power
Where his lightnings flashed,
When his clouds did lower
And his thunders crashed!

Thou shalt catch the gleam
Of his trenchant blade,
When his cohorts stream
To the nation's aid!

VI

THE VISION

Alone I stand upon the sacred plain
Whose every foot of land is holy ground;
Where martial deeds that still resound,
Welded each link of France's glorious chain
In the hot furnace of undying fame.
Here ancient Gaul rolled back the tidal wave
Of hellish lust led by the ruthless Hun
(Else had the nascent faith, undone,
Suffered eclipse). Here too the maiden brave,
Immortal Joan, invoking thy great name,
Mother of God, did shatter all the might
Of England proud—England our friend to-
day!

And was't not here, that other day
Of freedom's peril men beheld the sight
Of Blucher's minions, like to stricken deer,
Fleeing apace before the outraged might,
And strength superb of new-born liberty?
And shall these Glorious, themselves free
For aye, behold thee bound—a deeper night
Enshrouding thee than e'er was known?—

I hear

The answer in the southing wind that sweeps
Across the plain, like as in olden time
Did shattered Israel, past her prime,

And woke to feel anew such tide as leaps
In youthful veins—How is't the prophet saith?
“Caught was I up, I know not how, but found
Myself within a valley's deep recess,
My soul o'erwhelmed with sore distress
At Israel's fate, beholding, scattered round,
Her warriors' bones in that dread vale of death.
'O sacred bones,' I cried, 'who once were men
And upright stood, and loved and fought and
died,
In freedom's name! Why will ye hide
Your erstwhile valour in this gruesome glen,
Nor heed the call to battle as before?'
While thus I spake, nearby a Voice I heard,
Soft as the rippling stream or as the breeze
That gently murmurs through the trees,
Which asked a question of my soul I feared,
Yet longed to answer: 'Can these bones once
more
Be joined to life, thou Son of man? or must
They here remain while the doomed nation
groans
Beneath its load (my people's moans
Have reached mine ears) and heathen priests do
thrust
Their unclean idols in my holy place?'
Trembling, I cried, 'Thou knowest, Lord,' then
fell
Prostrate to earth before the august voice,
Which spake again, and said, 'Rejoice!
It shall be done.' Under the mystic spell,
Quickly I rose and eager turned to face

The task divine, and call the dead to life.
I spake, and lo! each bone began to stir
And seek his mate, while far and near,
Swords, spears and bucklers, instruments of strife,
Gleamed once again as when they fell from hands
Palsied in death. Then I, 'Alas, O Lord!
No breath have these; rigid they lie and prone,
As when first slain. Power is there none
Can give them life, and cheat the greedy sword
Of full its due?' Swift answer came: 'The sands
Have upward turned! Speak to the mighty Four,
And bid them yield with one united breath,
Life to thy slain!' I cried, and Death,
Spreading his vampire wings abroad before
The breeze celestial fled, and the vast host
Upleaping stood, the flower of their race!"
Thus much the prophet. As for me, I stand
And listen to the wind, the land
All wrapped in darkness and the very place
Where I stand guard surmounted by a post
Which marks the spot where the brave Valmy
sleeps. . . .
But what is this I hear?— Why rocks the earth
Beneath my feet? What pangs of birth
Convulse it while a wan light creeps
Along the ground?— Who, who are these that
tread,
With martial step, the highway leading down
To where the waiting ranks of France are found
Entrenched and undismayed? Around
Me shapes appear! Who is this shade that leads,
Cast in a royal mould, with shoulders bent

Beneath the weight of an imperial brow?
Yes, and that other passing now
Upon her milk-white charger, once more sent
To save thee and thy steps to guide, O France,
Past shoals and quicksands to a glorious port? . . .
The vision fades; the footsteps melt away;
The earth subsides: but all my way
Is strewn with light, for I the prophet's port
Of faith have entered in, past all mischance!

VII

THE RETURN

In the caverns deep
Where they calmly sleep,
Near the ocean's heaving swell;
From the frozen North,
And the tropic South,
And the East and West as well;
'Neath the stately dome,
Within sight of home,
Of the vast cathedral dim,
Or the open field,
Where their bones still yield
Their dole to the raven grim,
They have heard the knell
Of the tolling bell,
And they come to life again.

With the silent tread
Of the ghostly dead,
From forest, glade and glen,
To the trysting place
In their heavenly grace,
Come the Shadowy Marching Men!

In the twilight gray,
At the break of day,
Ere the night is wholly done;
As the shadows rise
In the purpling skies,
The victory shall be won.
For the Soul of strife
For the larger life,
Is one throughout the spheres;
And the Hand that guides,
For its own provides:
Bid avaunt, O land, thy fears!

VIII

THE MARCH OF THE SHADOWY MEN

List to the march of the Shadowy men,
The Shadowy men,
Who come again;
List to the march of the Shadowy men
Who come to the earth again!

Hark to the tramp of the hosts of God,
The hosts of God,
Who the vintage trod;
Hark to the tramp of the hosts of God
Who tread out the wine again!

Hail to the champions of right o'er wrong,
Of right o'er wrong,
In armour strong;
Hail to the champions of right o'er wrong,
Who don the armour again!

Come to the feast, ye birds of prey,
Ye birds of prey—
'Tis the Judgment Day!
Come to the feast, ye birds of prey:
The banquet is spread again!

IX

THE CITY INVOLUTE

Paris is saved! the whispered tidings flew
From mouth, then, growing bolder, leapt
From shore to shore and onward swept
Around the world, which bared its head and drew
The shoes from off its feet in chastened joy.
Thou couldst not fall! Fair Nineveh and Tyre,
Great Babylon, and e'en Imperial Rome,
In all its seven-hilled splendour, home,
Twice crowned, of greatness—these of sword and
fire

Might perish utterly like ancient Troy,
Leaving no trace; or with their splendour dimmed
And glory tarnished in the swift descent
From ancient greatness (having spent
Their all of worth in worthless ease) now rimmed
With littleness, but tears invite and scorn!
But thou, serene, inviolate, the shaft
Would strike thee speechless is not forged,
Nor e'er shall be. Dark lust, new-gorged
With bleeding innocence, and cunning craft
'Gainst thee shall not prevail till time is worn
To shreds. Not till the crack of doom,
When smoking mountains sudden cleave in twain,
And new-waked spirits leap to gain
Their erstwhile freedom from the binding tomb,

Shall thy fair towers yield them to decay!
Temple of art! within thy sacred shrine
What gleams are caught of nature's unveiled grace,
As wrapped in vision, face to face,
Thy worshippers are borne to heights divine,
And taste of life that ne'er shall pass away!
Fountain of truth! at thy perennial spring,
Who stoops to drink with wisdom shall be blest
And sweet content; nor shall his quest
Be vain who seeks from thy clear depths to bring
The living waters to the world's deep thirst!
Beacon of hope! thy flaming torch of yore
Pointed the way to freedom's ungained height,
And, beckoning still, its holy light
Falls on the world's undowered poor,
And lends its aid to all with bondage cursed!
And shall these fail? Shall thy pure light grow
dim,
Thy spring run dry, thine altar be o'erturned?—
Thou need'st but ask the foe who 'twas that turned
His shaft away from thy bare heart and him
Drew sidelong into ruin past repair!



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